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ABSTRACT

Between February and November, 1978, six regional workshops were held on basic skills education, co-sponsored by the University of Colorado at Denver and the U.S. Office of Education. Three hundred educators and representatives of business and community groups attended. Each meeting included opportunities for small groups, organized both heterogeneously and on the basis of similar educational roles, to discuss the problems and issues related to six broad questions concerning basic skills education, and to make specific recommendations. These questions were: (1) What constitutes the basic skills and what segments of the educational system are addressing them? (2) What models appear to be successful in teaching basic skills? (3) What delivery systems are available? Are they in conflict? Are they supportive? (4) What can L.E.A.s and communities do to achieve better cooperation? (5) What can S.E.A.s and institutions of higher education do to achieve better cooperation? and (6) What can the U.S. Office of Education do to achieve better cooperation? This report organizes and summarizes the over 5,000 recommendations developed by the workshop participants. Appendixes discuss basic skills for Native American and bilingual students, as well as basic mathematical skills. (Author/PGD)

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BASIC SKILLS EDUCATION

PROBLEMS/ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS

February 1979

Prepared

for

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Office of Education/Basic Skills Coordination Steering Committee

EA 013 536

Compiled

by

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INTRODUCTION

Between February and November, 1978, six regional workshops were held on Basic Skills education co-sponsored by the University of Colorado at Denver and the U.S. Office of Education. These meetings were conducted in Phoenix, Arizona; San Francisco, California; Atlanta, Georgia; Chicago, Illinois; San Antonio, Texas; and Boston, Massachusetts. The agenda of each workshop included a discussion and analysis of the problems and issues involved in the teaching and learning of Basic Skills.

Over three hundred workshop participants were drawn from commerce and industry; public and private schools; teachers; professional organizations; local, state and federal education agencies; parents' and community groups; and higher education.

While the format and discussion emphasis varied from workshop to workshop, each meeting included an opportunity for small groups to discuss the problems and issues and to make specific recommendations. In order to generate the most useful ideas, two different groupings were conducted at each workshop:

1. heterogeneous groups which included a cross-section of the several Basic Skills constituencies noted above, and

2. "role-alike" groups which enabled all the participants from one area (e.g. teachers and state education agencies) to discuss the issues from the special perspective of their professional role.

This two-group system provided consistent opportunity for communication between and among the various subgroups. It also generated valuable suggestions which cut across all constituencies as well as some recommendations which were particularly important to a specific basic skills group.

Most discussions were focused on six broad questions which were sent to all participants before they attended their workshop:

1. What constituted the Basic Skills and what segments of the educational system are addressing them?

2. What models appear to be successful in teaching Basic Skills?

3. What delivery systems are available? Are they in conflict? Are they supportive?

4. What can L.E.A.'s and communities do to achieve better cooperation?

5. What can S.E.A.'s and institutions of higher education do to achieve better cooperation?

6. What can the U.S. Office of Education do to achieve better cooperation?

Each regional group received written discussion summaries from previous sessions so they were able to advance the ideas of their predecessors. A few participants and project staff members also were in discussion groups at several meetings, thus providing additional continuity.

Individual participants offered both written and oral recommendations to the workshop staff. This report attempts to organize and report over 5,000 separate recommendations. The report summarizes the major problems, issues, and recommendations that participants developed in response to the six identified questions. The last section noted the special issues and concerns which were expressed at the role-alike meetings. A composite list of participants may be found in Appendix IV.

PROBLEMS/ISSUES/RECOMMENDATIONS

I. What Constitutes the Basic Skills and What Segments of the Educational System Are Addressing Them?

A. Definition:

The U.S. Office of Education's Task Force on Basic Skills offered this definition to workshop participants for their reaction:

> "Basic Skills refers to the fundamental competencies that hold the key to successful achievement in the areas of communication and computation" (listening, reading, writing and arithmetic).

Problem:

Every group expressed some concern and provided suggestions regarding this most basic of basic skill questions.

Issues:

The U.S. Office of Education Basic Skills Task Force suggestion was an attempt to have a "kernel" definition - one which almost everyone could accept as essential. A few participants wanted to delete the application-oriented "that hold the key to successful achievement" phrase. Others felt any definition was too restrictive and "back to basics" oriented. Still others expressed concern that a USOE "official definition" might impede attempts at implementing basic skills programs when the federal definition did not coincide with a state version. The overwhelming majority of participants, however, believed a generally acceptable definition was important.

It was agreed that Basic Skills are basic, a fundamental right for each of our nation's citizens. Practically everyone agreed that the suggested definition was too restrictive and rote-memory oriented in the "arithmetic" area. The use of the words "mathematics (problem solving and computation)" was found most acceptable (see Appendix II). There was also agreement that the "successful achievement" phrase should be retained. Most state fundamental competency tests focus on the application of Basic Skills because they are valuable only if they can be used in "real life" situations. Finally, most participants agreed that the definition must be broadened to recognize that the skills can be learned in several modes and/or languages.

No consensus was reached on many other suggested additions, such as these:

- still more focus on different "learning styles" (or cognitive styles) and the different modes that can be used to teach Basic Skills.

- learning skills or study skills (e.g. memory or concentration techniques, efficient listening and note taking skills) which can be taught to enhance learning and living.

- other "basic" educational content that many districts have included as essential: artistic knowledge and appreciation, citizenship/civics fundamentals, values clarification, knowledge of state and national history and basic sciences.

- the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills (e.g. effective verbal and non-verbal communication; decision making and time management skills) a person needs to be an effective, functioning member of society.

- acknowledge that Basic Skills must be directed toward functioning effectively in a diverse, pluralistic society.

- the definition should be defined and clarified to specifically include those populations most in need of Basic Skills instruction or requiring special instructional modes (e.g. bilingual, handicapped, adults).

These suggestions had some strong support, but none had enough to be included in the final, "kernel" definition. Participants did agree that acknowledgement should be made that local and state educational agencies might work to broaden the definition beyond the "kernel" which forms the framework and basis for the rest of this report.

Recommendations:

1. This should be the kernel definition: "Basic Skills refers to the fundamental competencies, acquired in any language or mode to ensure successful achievement in the areas of communication and mathematics (listening, speaking, reading, writing, computation, and problem solving)."

2. Continually emphasize that the Basic Skills are not compensatory. They are fundamental competencies required by every individual in our society.

3. While the "kernel" Basic Skills are very specific, the modes of teaching and learning them are not. Different groups and different individuals have different learning styles and learning needs. Basic Skills instruction must respond to these differences.

4. Local and state educational agencies may (in fact, probably should) extend the "kernel" definition to include regionally-accepted fundamental competencies.

B. Who Should Be Involved?

Problems:

The school curriculum and instructional system are still viewed by many as the prerogative of the state and local kindergarten-through-12th grade systems. Individuals and groups outside the K-12 system are seen as having little impact on Basic Skills curriculum and instruction.

Issues:

There was strong agreement by participants that schools must be part of and responsive to a wider "educational" community. Parent and community groups, commerce and industry organizations, adult and higher education agencies and private schools are already involved in Basic Skills education; their participation must be extended. It is particularly important to extend the participation to segments of the community that traditionally have not been decision makers (e.g., minorities, handicapped, the poor, non-English speakers). The role of higher education is a particularly sensitive and far-ranging one. Colleges receive the "products" of the K-12 systems; they provide Basic Skills instruction, and they train the educational professionals who participate in the system. It is very important that institutions of higher education be made full partners in the overall Basic Skills education focus.

Recommendations:

1. The entire community, educational and non-educational, should have an interchange of ideas and recommendations on the Basic Skills delivery system and the

quality control of its constituents. Groups formerly excluded from decision making must be included.

2. Each local, state and federal agency which effects change through grant awards should make long-term commitments for those funds. Funds should be awarded for periods of time up to five years. Another suggested system is to award "renewable" grants which, upon demonstration of success, can be continued for longer periods. This would assure ample time for quality implementation and impact studies.

3. Community advisory committees should be strengthened to assure that their input and recommendations have been viewed and valued. At the present time, there are too many different advisory committees working in each community. One committee, for all programs, should be established with an emphasis upon coordinating resources, grant objectives, etc. These committees should receive ample funds to conduct their business. They must represent a complete cross-section of parents and the community and they must emphasize Basic Skills education as a primary focus of their study.

4. Commerce and industry should be viewed as part of the educational system. They should be allowed to seek educational funds for the training and education of their employees either directly or through a cooperative arrangement with a local college or adult education agency. Funds should also be made available to industry and commerce for the dissemination of quality educational programs and materials.

5. The role of private schools in Basic Skills education must also be recognized and support for it must be built into all program decisions.

6. All Basic Skills programs must be coordinated with institutions of higher education in order to recognize the key role they play in the total process.

C. Allocation and Distribution of Funds

Problem:

Several groups raised concern (especially in the Chicago workshop which focused on the unique needs of urban districts)

that there may be a more appropriate distribution process of Basic Skills monies than through state dissemination.

Issues:

An overwhelming percentage of those persons requiring improvement in Basic Skills live in large urban areas. While distributing some funds through the states allows all local districts to compete on a relatively equal basis, there is no reason why the federal government cannot also allow local agencies to apply for Basic Skills program support. For example, the Chicago, New York City or Salt Lake City Boards of Education could well decide that their needs are so strong and so specific that they should apply separately from the state agency. There seems to be no reason why the state agencies in those three states need handle the big, but very special problems, of the three big cities. An "institutional force" must be a component of any agency's proposal, but the institution may be a local Board of Education or a Mayor's office rather than a State Education Agency.

Recommendation:

Make provisions for direct application of Basic Skills grants to the federal government by larger cities. These monies should be open and competitive and in addition to already allocated state funds.

D. State Basic Skills Coordinator:

Problem:

Several groups felt that the State Coordinator for Basic Skills should be outside the State educational system thus enhancing his/her effectiveness, power and capacity to coordinate the work of the many components of Basic Skills education.

Issues:

The development of Basic Skills for all Americans requires a strong agency directing and supporting the efforts. If we are to consider the directive that all our citizens (not only students in our K-12 classrooms) be given the opportunity to develop Basic Skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, problem solving and computation, then each state must develop its own comprehensive program and select the best individual to coordinate it. In many states the strongest agency might well be the State

Education Agency, while in other states the strongest institutional force might be a non-educational agency.

Some states have found that statewide changes in educational practices (e.g., Utah's effort in basic skills) are well implemented using an inter-agency committee composed of persons from the Basic Skills areas (e.g., Right to Read Director) and educators representing all levels of public education. This inter-agency council might work more effectively with a person outside the state educational agency (perhaps with a person working on the governor's staff) than with a colleague "re-designated" as Basic Skills Coordinator (but previously called the Right to Read Director or the Language Arts Director). While there is no doubt that persons already working on Basic Skills-related programs should serve on the coordinating committee in each state, it is not clear that the effective "institutionalized" force must be selected from the education agency, per se. Instead, other alternatives must be considered for their potential "clout" in accomplishing the goals of directing better coordination and communication between all Basic Skills agencies.

A significant percentage of Americans lacking Basic Skills are not members of public school classrooms. Approximately 40 percent of the deficient are over 65 and others are school "dropouts." These persons could be reached through a program proposed by state health care agencies or through corporations who often hire persons without a high school diploma. If the agency coordinating Basic Skills training were not under a traditional academic umbrella, it would increase the chances that all Americans would benefit from funds devoted to Basic Skills.

Higher education also has a big stake in Basic Skills education -- it provides direct instruction and it trains the teachers of Basic Skills. In California there are three separate public systems of higher education (community colleges, state colleges and universities, and the University of California) and many private schools, none of which are controlled by the state education agency. It seems likely that a Basic Skills Coordinator who is not part of the K-12 system could do a more effective job of coordinating the higher education forces with those of the SEA and other Basic Skills agencies.

Recommendations:

1. Each state is urged to consider the alternatives of the placement of the Coordinator of Basic Skills in terms of potential effectiveness. In some states, it may be wisest to select an agency or position outside the state education agency (e.g., deputy to the governor).

2. Wherever the Basic Skills Coordinator is housed, it is crucial that his/her role is clearly defined as one which requires close collaboration with all agencies which have a role in providing effective Basic Skills education.

II. What Models Appear to be Successful in Teaching Basic Skills?

Problem

It is important to identify Basic Skills instructional programs which work. Then information about good programs must be disseminated to Basic Skills providers so the programs can be adopted or adapted.

The development of strong teacher, administrator, and staff preservice and in-service training is critical to the implementation of all successful models. So is the involvement of parents - both in providing input and in assisting teachers in their delivery. Basic Skills education models are enhanced if there is subject matter and continuity throughout the educational system. Smaller classes and longer funding cycles which include model evaluation sections can also make a significant contribution. Better cooperation between the state/local education agencies and the developers and evaluators of educational models (higher education/education materials companies/curriculum departments) will also result in better models.

Finally, a better evaluation and dissemination system is required to allow the direct providers of Basic Skills education to use the materials that are best for their learners. Major issues were identified as topics and criteria for the evaluation of successful models:

1. the need for greater emphasis upon the identification and teaching of Basic Skills;

2. the need for greater flexibility regarding student mobility and transience;

3. the need to develop more positive school climates;

4. the need for efficient and effective parent/community involvement and support;

5. the need to establish more efficient state systems to coordinate and facilitate Basic Skills services;

6. the need to develop more effective teacher pre-service education;

7. the need to identify more selective teacher certification standards;

8. the need for the establishment of Teacher Centers and locally-controlled in-service education facilities that are responsive to locally-perceived needs and objectives;

9. the need for the evaluation and assessment of the competencies of teachers;

10. the need to reduce excessive overcrowding of classrooms.

The Project Staff and Basic Skills Task Force pointed out that special groups in our nation require special materials and models to learn most effectively. These groups include learners who are:

- low income
- urban
- rural
- bilingual or non-English-speaking
- Native American
- college students
- adults
- participants in business/industry training programs

Some questions that must be asked in order to evaluate models appropriate for special groups are:

1. How are the needs of this group integrated into Basic Skills instruction?

2. Which methods and approaches are most successful in working with this group?

3. What materials are effective?

4. What is the nature of teacher training in this area?

5. What are the best assessment devices available?

6. What are the promising practices and programs?

7. How can the following educational agencies provide assistance?

   Federal
   State
   Local

An example of how these questions are answered for Bilingual and Native American learners is contained in Appendix I of this report.

It is important to note that the recommendations in Appendix I discuss programs that were found successful by workshop participants in their local settings. They do not represent endorsements by the U. S. Office of Education, the Basic Skills Task Force, or the Project Staff.

Recommendation:

The U. S. Office of Education should use Appendix I as a starting point to further identify and evaluate model Basic Skills programs. Reports of successful models should be disseminated so they can be adopted or adapted to local needs.

III. What Delivery Systems are Available? Are They in Conflict? Are They Supportive?

A. National Priorities

There appears to be a serious question as to the National priorities in education. Are Basic Skills a priority and is the federal government prepared to support this priority to accomplish something of value?

Issue:

The federal government often identifies national priorities in education, excites the public and the educational community, and then often fails to sufficiently support the initiatives to help make them succeed. Is this another example of such a practice? Failure to financially support federal initiatives causes educational and community problems that are hard to rectify.

Recommendations:

1. Federal as well as state initiatives should have financial backing before they are implemented.

2. Federal dollars should be coordinated and awarded with multiple-year contracts and commitments. This will facilitate implementation and institutionalization.

3. Federal publications should be prepared and disseminated on federal and state programs that appear to be working.

B. Federal Regulations

Federal rules and regulations, as currently published, are often unclear, sometimes contradictory, and usually not coordinated with other similar projects.

Issues:

Local education agencies (LEAs) and institutions of higher education (IHEs) appear to be responding to isolated requests for proposals (RFPs) without regard to the coordination of multiple funds which could address common concerns or problems. Federal funds are often categorical and they do not encourage multiple application or concomitant implementation. There appears to be no attempt to coordinate one RFP with other related RFPs issued by the U. S. Office of Education. As a result, many federal programs work in isolation from the "real world" and from other similar or complementary projects.

Recommendations:

1. State and local agencies should be given more flexibility in the use of federal funds.

2. USOE should have longer funding periods (up to the full four/five year length of the legislation). They should encourage more effective evaluation and better integration between related projects.

3. The U. S. Office of Education should fund fewer projects. They should require that their RFPs be coordinated before they are sent-out and they should ensure that projects are well-coordinated and inter-related.

C. State Response:

States are responding to the concern for Basic Skills in a variety of ways, many of which are in conflict and are not supported by research or by educational theory. As a result, questionable practices are being initiated external to the educational system and imposed upon that isolated system.

Issues:

Currently the educational curriculum, as well as the organization of the schools, are under attack by parents, industry and commerce, and legislators. Schools are now in a reactive rather than a pro-active position. The end result would appear to be a continuation of the

"I'm lost - help me find the way" syndrome that has plagued education in recent years.

Recommendations:

1. A concerted effort should be made to "educate" legislators on the implications of the legislation they propose.

2. Professional organizations should develop more complete communication practices that inform all memberships of new and pending legislation and that solicit action and reaction.

D. Categorical Funding

The schools reflect the "categorization" of funds.

Issues:

Schools reflect the funding categories established by Congress and USOE. Children are lumped, huddled, or grouped according to the funding used to instruct them. As a result, there tends to be a philosophical conflict between implementing a total school process and the isolation of children to deliver specific services.

Recommendations:

1. Schools should be required to show how all children under separate funding will be integrated into a total school process.

2. Categorical funding should be viewed with an intent to combine common programs and to integrate services and not to duplicate them.

E. Other Problems: Instructional, Philosophical - Legal, Political, and Economic

There are several other problems which make it difficult to deliver basic skills instruction effectively. They are grouped as instructional, philosophical, legal, political, and economic.

Issues:

Instructional:

1. Teachers object to the paperwork involved in state and federal reporting requirements, particularly when the same children are involved in more than one program.

2. There appears to be little integration of services for children.

3. Staff members funded by federal grants are often isolated from the regular staff. Teachers/administrators need assistance in

coordinating and in improving management of instruction, materials, and time within the school within individual classrooms.

4. Teachers are rarely involved in any change decisions but are most likely to be criticized when there is a problem in delivery of services.

5. Teachers object to children being pulled out constantly for special programs.

6. It is difficult for citizens to get good data about programs because of the lack of access to information and/or the time lag in receiving it.

7. Assessment tools differ from program to program.

Philosophical:

1. There is a question about the national priorities in education.

2. There is a general feeling that everyone is an "expert" on education.

Legal:

1. There are conflicts between teachers and parents over what should be taught in the classroom.

2. There are mandates from courts on curriculum modification, e.g., bilingual education, special education.

Political:

1. Regulations are constantly changing and may be in conflict with one another.

2. Conflicts arise: courts versus superintendent versus school board (legal versus financial versus political versus educational).

3. Many advisory committee members end up with too much paperwork.

4. Coordination, information, exchange, and review of promising practices should be within the academic departments in the schools.

Economic:

1. Funding cutbacks hurt programs.

2. "Mainstreaming" legislation and bilingual programs have meant that schools are asked to do more with fewer resources.

3. The problems associated with categorical funding diminish the teacher's effectiveness.

Recommendations:

1. Allow teachers more involvement in the Basic Skills decision-making process especially in the area of the integration and coordination of programs.

2. Make education a high national priority and support the idea that educational professionals have special expertise.

3. Clarify the implications of the court's control over curriculum and other educational decisions.

4. Attempt to eliminate the territorial conflicts (courts versus superintendents versus school board versus teachers versus parents) which plague educational delivery.

5. Do not ask schools to do more Basic Skills instruction with less money.

F. Duplication of Effort:

There is tremendous duplication of effort in Basic Skills programs.

Issues:

The USOE Basic Skills Task Force identified 53 programs with Basic Skills components. They usually do not collaborate or communicate with each other. The following 15 programs are judged to be the most significantly related to basic skills.

Right to Read
Trio
Follow Through
Title I
Bilingual
Teacher Corps

Teacher Centers
Library and Learning Resources
Metric Education
Adult Basic Education
Migrant Education
Indian Education
Headstart
Higher Education

Others are: Career Education, Handicapped, Emergency School Aid, Title IV, Vocational Education, Arts and Humanities, and Gifted and Talented.

Recommendation:

Efforts should focus on the USOE programs which have the greatest connection to Basic Skills. Support for the Basic Skills components of these areas should be expanded and close coordination should be tied into the funding.

IV. What Can Local Education Agencies(LEAs) and Communities Do to Achieve Better Cooperation?

A. Credibility Gaps

Some credibility gaps appear to exist between what the schools say they are doing and what the community and parents perceive is being accomplished.

Issues:

Individuals interested in education talk about communication, but little is done to inform parents, legislators, and others regarding the success and failures of the schools. Without such communication, the schools will become the victim of attacks from concerned parents and politically motivated politicians.

Recommendations:

1. LEAs should establish specific practices and procedures to inform their constituents regarding test scores, new programs, and other educational developments.

2. LEAs should initiate in-service programs that will help teachers understand and be better able to inform parents and others about school programs.

3. LEAs should recognize their role in providing public information and do it well.

4. LEAs should communicate the idea that education is not just the responsibility of the schools; it is a total community responsibility.

B. The Relationship to the Public

Attempts to achieve better communication between the school and the community have often been too modest or ineffective.

Issues:

Some efforts have met with good success:

1. The "Let's Talk" program in Wisconsin appears to have achieved better cooperation between LEAs and communities.

2. Teacher Center programs usually include a policy board that provides direction. Teachers see them as a response to their needs. There is, however, some conflict with some school boards over the administration and management of Teacher Centers.

3. The collective bargaining process has increased the input of teachers in decision-making at the LEA level.

4. Parent Volunteers in Schools also have been shown effective.

5. Private industry often participates in the benefits from the instruction and cooperative programs with community colleges.

However, many of the positive efforts noted above can have problematic side effects. The Teacher Centers can develop some paranoia among university educators; advisory boards are sometimes misused; collective bargaining often goes far afield from "educational issues;" parent volunteers are sometimes seen as untutored meddlers or as tools of a school system that is unable or unwilling to provide real teachers; the relationship between business and community colleges is often uneasy, each side occasionally concerned that the other is "using us." In addition, some personnel practices within LEAs tend to limit quality instruction and cause concern within the community. Paraprofessionals are sometimes used when certified practitioners are available and qualified. Certified teachers are often paid at hourly and contract rates which are less than the LEA standard wage.

Recommendations:

1. LEAs should use policy or advisory boards more effectively as resources and as proponents of the system and publicize their use widely.

2. The many important substantive educational issues that arise or result from collective bargaining should be emphasized.

3. Parent volunteers and paraprofessionals must be well trained and supervised. Their role and effectiveness and their limits must also be publicized.

4. Local community colleges should increase their mutually beneficial ties with local industry.

V. What Can State Education Agencies and Institutions of Higher Education Do to Achieve Better Cooperation?

A. The Relationship Between SEAs and IHEs

SEAs and IHEs should learn to be more supportive of each other and use each other's talents to enhance education in the state.

Issues:

SEAs and IHEs have tremendous resources to address the needs and goals of the states and the LEAs. However, few states have entered into any cooperative association where those talents are channeled or combined to improve the quality of education. IHEs still tend to function in isolation and only at the time of teacher certification or program approval do they share common goals or initiatives. As a result, resources are wasted and talents are not maximized.

Several other issues and comments resulted from the six workshops. The major ones are noted below:

1. Basic Skills should be defined more clearly before IHEs can develop method classes or curriculum to address them.

2. SEAs and sometimes LEAs are often seen by teachers as "enforcers" rather than "assisters."

3. Courses that are taught in higher education are often determined by the SEAs who are responsible for certification. Sometimes these requirements are not compatible with proven methods of teaching Basic Skills.

4. SEAs and IHEs can work more closely in the area of credentialling. Some requirements were too rigid, while in other places they are too easy. Care should be taken to control the flow of new teachers and keep supply and demand even.

5. Teachers in college need to have more recent experience in the classroom. They should return periodically for "reminder" experience.

6. Teachers often need to understand more thoroughly children's various learning modalities (e.g., visual, auditory, kinesthetic). Generally, they need greater preparation in the area of child development.

7. Professional education associations can give in-service classes in cooperation with the district and the IHE.

8. SEAs, higher education, and professional education associations should work together to assist in the total education process.

9. External assessment of teacher education should include higher education, teachers, students, community, and public school administrators.

10. Teacher Centers should be developed as cooperative ventures.

11. Higher Education should develop new strategies of instruction so that teachers can integrate them into curriculum.

12. The state department of education should use more flexibility in certification.

13. "Hands-on" kinds of in-service sessions are valuable.

14. In funding training programs, SEAs should provide that substitutes can be paid to release teachers from classrooms.

15. There is a need to provide trained teachers for Learning Assistance Centers (LACs). These centers usually focus on Basic Skills and developmental education. They often have a diverse group of professionals and many learning modes available to facilitate students' learning.

16. SEAs should sponsor in-service experiences for teachers and administrators.

17. SEAs should work with higher education to set up courses on the "politics of education," i.e., how curriculum is determined, and a possible internship in an SEA.

18. Teacher training should emphasize that all teachers should teach or reinforce Basic Skills in every area of instruction. Trainees should focus on how to teach and integrate Basic Skills instruction into all disciplines.

19. Pre-service teachers should demonstrate a mastery of their own basic skills prior to the granting of their diplomas or teaching certificates.

Recommendations:

1. SEAs and IHEs should work cooperatively to deliver teacher in-service education that is compatible with the goals and objectives of the state.

2. SEAs and IHEs should institute faculty/staff/administration exchange programs to increase mutual understanding and to identify ways to enhance cooperative efforts.

3. Higher education faculties should be encouraged to work in LEAs.

4. SEAs should coordinate with IHEs (especially community colleges which have major instructional responsibilities in Basic Skills).

B. Teacher Certification

Teacher certification standards in many states are ineffective and do not require maintenance of standards of excellence. There is seldom a system to renew credentials.

Issues:

There are some teacher candidates that should never have been certified and there are some teachers who should lose their certification. Of these teachers, many have never developed the skill of teaching, while others have lost it. In some cases, teachers and/or pre-service teachers don't possess the Basic Skills they are being asked to teach.

Recommendations:

1. Institute higher standards of teacher certification with an emphasis upon identifiable competencies.

2. Credentialling should be an on-going process with no permanent certification. Teachers should be required to update their teaching skills as well as their content knowledge to renew their certificate.

3. SEAs should assist IHEs in assessing the competencies of pre-service teachers in the areas of Basic Skills.

VI. What Can the U.S. Office of Education Do to Achieve Better Cooperation?

A basic theme ran throughout the workshops. Participants said, "The federal government should provide more money with fewer strings and they should give more of it to me. I'm where the real Basic Skills action is!" Beyond this, participants did not isolate particular programs and issues related to the USOE question. They did make the following recommendations:

A. Dissemination Practices:

1. Identify programs and publications which relate to Basic Skills and act as a clearinghouse for information.

2. An 800-number hotline should be used to provide Basic Skills information.

3. Use publications of professional associations such as NEA or AFT to distribute information on "promising instructional practices."

4. Use SEA publications to disseminate information directly to practitioners.

5. Make a single federal coordinating agency responsible for Basic Skills (e.g., Right to Read Effort) which can identify model programs and the specific strengths of each.

6. Develop a newsletter which identifies promising practices for the practitioner.

7. Emphasize the use of audio visual equipment (e.g., film strips and cassettes) which can assist Basic Skills programs.

8. Develop job performance aids which can be disseminated.

9. Utilize computer technology with terminals at SEAs, LEAs, and IHEs for immediate dissemination.

10. Make directions explicit and compatible all the way through channels (HEW to LEAs).

11. USOE should work more closely with/through the regional offices.

12. USOE should be more aggressive in going "out into the field" to identify valuable programs, package them properly, and disseminate them.

13. Model programs should be identified and they should be involved in some system of training others in good techniques either by inviting others for site visits, by packaging and exporting the ideas, or by funding the "model-builder" to visit other areas.

B. Coordination Practices:

1. Create a formal system to learn what SEAs are doing in Basic Skills research and practice.

2. Make travel a priority so USOE staff members may visit, monitor, and evaluate programs on a continuing basis.

3. Fund fewer programs and require that they provide better communication and coordination.

4. Promote IHEs involvement at the LEA level through research and demonstration grants and solicit dissemination procedures that will allow and encourage replication and modification.

5. Re-emphasize service rather than regulatory approaches of SEAs.

6. Increase the amount of local or state control of funds and programs.

7. Simplify paperwork. Revisions in regulations must begin at the top.

8. Make federal funds available for in-service to encourage cooperation with USOE, higher education, LEAs, and SEAs.

9. Establish better dialogue with Chief State School Officers to solicit their early involvement in USOE priorities and activities.

10. Establish a center which is current on all Basic Skills information. Use it to respond to questions and to actively disseminate information.

C. General Comments:

1. USOE should support the states. State problems are most appropriately handled at the state level and all funding and decision-making should be kept at the lowest (closest to students) level possible.

2. USOE should listen to practitioners and use their ideas. (This grant has helped a great deal and should be replicated for other priorities.)

3. USOE should make an effort to publish the good news in education to help build community confidence in schools and to enhance the teachers' self-image.

4. Identify a population of students which lacks a record of "successful achievement" in Basic Skills and identify the factors which relate to this program. We need more information and research on why students are not learning the basics.

5. Encourage Teacher Centers and Teacher Corps because they appear to be a positive step and allow for local initiative and development of expertise on the local level.

6. Regulations which are written after legislation should establish parameters and not be too restrictive.

7. More emphasis should be put on funding programs for adult education (direct impact on adults and indirect on children).

8. Sponsor programs to train people to work in Learning Assistance Centers at all levels from kindergarten through college/adult centers.

9. Write proposals on-site so that teachers can be more involved.

10. States need personal feedback rather than a form letter.

11. States need technical assistance on a personal basis, including where resources are and how to use them. The de-emphasis of the Regional USOE Office will have negative effects on meeting local needs, especially in rural and small towns.

12. Sponsor ads on TV (public service announcements) on such topics as: What parents can do in the home; visiting your child's school; adult education.

13. Funds for longer periods of time for better coordination, communications, and planning. Build incentives and plans to encourage local systems to continue the Basic Skills programs after federal funding ceases.

14. Fund Basic Skills programs in colleges especially at the community college level.

ROLE ALIKE COMMENTS

Each workshop scheduled meetings where participants with similar professional roles could discuss areas of concern. While many of their concerns have been covered in the section from the Heterogeneous groups, it is important to identify the special concerns of these particular groups.

VII. PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

Teachers, of course, are most directly involved in the daily Basic Skills process and their comments reflect that close connection. While some teachers at the workshops represented just themselves, some spoke for a special discipline, grade level or program, and others represented their professional organizations. Because of their close connection to the learning process and the important contributions they could make, the Basic Skills Project Staff invested more time and energy in assuring strong teacher participation than for any other group.

1. Concern was expressed about the narrow definition of Basic Skills.

   a. Instructional implications: The preliminary definition does not allow for a variety of learning styles.

b. Funding implications: Funds might be available only if Basic Skills are defined in a certain way.

2. Teachers should be involved in decision-making process at all levels.

   a. Catalogs of Basic Skills programs should be sent directly to individual schools rather than to LEAs.

   b. Teachers need to be closely involved in advisory committees.

3. There should be USOE grant money for teacher development for projects that are directly related to the classroom.

4. Teacher Centers hold great promise as teachers are involved in their planning. This model should be expanded.

5. Teachers feel isolated from college and university efforts in teacher education. Colleges and universities should find ways to involve teachers in program planning, course development, etc.

6. Several comments related directly to USOE.

   a. USOE must determine what product it is producing and how to disseminate it so it effectively reaches the classroom teacher.

   b. USOE needs closer liaison with professional teacher associations.

   c. Teachers are often suspicious of the professional commitment of some USOE administrators as they relate to the art of teaching.

   d. USOE must seek and accept teacher input when funding programs.

7. Travel funds at LEAs are often mal-distributed and often exclude teachers from regional or national meetings. Administrators become the sole voice for the practitioner.

8. Substitutes should be hired in order to free teachers so they can attend meetings.

9. There should be a national library of Basic Skills products and programs.

10. Just having a Basic Skills Task Force can make the public think that teachers are not doing their jobs.

11. Teachers object to the idea that Basic Skills is a package that can be produced by simple discussion and dialogue.

12. There is a different school population now with the advent of mainstreaming. Basic Skills should be defined for this population as an integral part of their education.

13. Reading is often seen as a cure-all panacea. Title I emphasized language arts and reading. This single emphasis may jeopardize other subject areas which are vital to Basic Skills and to survival.

14. Information regarding effective parenting should be part of a comprehensive Basic Skills program.

15. The practitioner is often on the outside even when SEAs and LEAs cooperate. The teacher must be viewed as an equal.

16. The credibility of the practitioner must be reinforced with the public.

17. There is concern that funding might go just for Basic Skills which have been narrowly defined. As a result, curriculum may be determined by other than the practitioner.

18. The Voucher System should not be considered at the expense of public education.

19. Commerce and industry should be viewed as a part of the education system, but they should not be eligible for Basic Skills monies at the expense of the public sector.

20. Perhaps the state Basic Skills Coordinator should be outside the SEA.

21. Responsibility for the educational process does not rest solely with the educational institution, but with the family and community as well.

22. In some cases, teachers and/or pre-service teachers don't know the processes necessary to teach the Basic Skills. These teachers should receive additional help and support.

23. Some states fail to provide sufficient materials (i.e., consumables) within the funding of public education. This hits the low-income student and family very hard.

24. Basic Skills should not create new anxieties for professionals; rather it should be viewed as a vehicle to provide new support and assistance for the teacher.

25. Staff development should be planned in terms of assessed needs (instructional staff and students).

VIII. PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. Inservice: Teachers should be supported financially to attend inservice training programs. Teachers should be part of the teaching process and should be the central source of information.

2. Certification: Certification of teachers should reflect competencies as measured by successful completion of degree programs, courses, travel, independent learning, etc. Teachers should judge for themselves.

3. Money: Education should receive the funding that it deserves. The funds, however, should be used at the practitioner level to assure direct benefit to the students.

4. Basic Skills: Basic Skills should be an integral part of an educational program that "speaks to all students." They should not be isolated and over-dramatized.

IX. COMMERCE, INDUSTRY, AND PARENTS

These groups represent the "secondary consumers" of Basic Skills instruction. They receive the "products" of the educational system within their homes and businesses. They are also intimately involved in the process because they pay for much of it through taxes, gifts, and tuition. Businesses are increasingly involved in Basic Skills instruction. Often they must train new employees in developmental tasks -- a role they find distasteful but necessary.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

1. School site counselors or school improvement committees are most important in getting parents involved.

2. The principal is the key person in successful public school systems.

3. Some school districts have instructional strategy councils. They receive grants from a private foundation to pay substitutes in order to enable top teachers to revamp and coordinate the curriculum.

4. Survival skills classes are a necessary part of Basic Skills instruction (e.g., balancing checkbook, reading job applications).

5. A clearinghouse on information about business resources available to schools is important. Schools should work with business and industries.

6. There is too much duplication of programming at all levels of the educational system.

7. We must find ways to stop the labeling of students who are taken out of general classes for special attention to remedial subjects. They are difficult to deal with when employing.

8. There is too much paperwork involved in dealing with USOE.

9. The SEAs should receive the federal monies and give it to the LEAs that are effectively accomplishing their goals.

10. USOE is too far removed to monitor local programs.

11. USOE should let the SEAs and LEAs handle the grants in order to cut down on overhead.

12. Parents, volunteers, and/or aides in the classroom must be well-trained and supervised. Schools must not be a baby-sitting service. Inexpensive paraprofessionals cannot substitute for well-trained teachers.

13. We should be able to use local community colleges or adult education centers to provide Basic Skills for those who haven't mastered them in the K-12 system. Cooperative work with these systems is preferable to duplicating a Basic Skills education system within the commercial/private sector.

X. PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Local education agencies have the responsibility of managing the delivery of the locally controlled education which Americans support so strongly. Many believe that their main business is

Basic Skills instruction, and that, by and large, they do it well. They want more assistance and fewer mandates from above; more sincere advice and respect, and fewer uniformed complaints from their local constituencies.

A. Superintendents:

1. Seeking Federal help in addressing a Basic Skills issue is, for the Superintendent, an admission of serious deficiency within his system.

   a. To what extent will superintendents be willing to wash such fundamental dirty linen in public?

   b. To what extent should the federal government be concerned over such a fundamental state and local responsibility?

2. Basic Skills proficiency should be addressed in a locally or state-initiated proposal within a more comprehensive design for learning, not on a national level.

3. Advisory Councils: How necessary and worthwhile are extensive advisory councils in such a fundamental "bread and butter" issue as Basic Skills? Should not the professionals be capable of identifying the Basic Skills in response to the federal definition?

4. Funding: It doesn't make sense for the federal government to recommend that LEAs or SEAs attempt to fund Basic Skills programs by passing the hat among private, fraternal and philanthropic groups. If the tax money which is budgeted for education is not being spent first on Basic Skills, then for what is it being spent?

5. What degree of responsibility will the superintendent have for involving private parochial schools in such areas as development, implementation, assessment, and accountability?

B. Title One Directors:

Why should Title One programs be linked to a statewide Basic Skills Plan? Why duplicate programs?

1. Needs assessment is required by Title I. The available data could be fed into the statewide assessment.

2. Parent Advisory Councils exist in Title I. A representative of that body could be included in the state advisory group.

3. Title I mandates the use of evaluation models to provide feedback. These could be used in local evaluations in Basic Skills.

4. Title I funds are allocated to districts whose programs are designed to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged. Basic Skills funds will, for the most part, be directed toward the same children.

C. General:

1. Basic Skills should be refined at the local level.

2. The local site administrators are the most important or key persons in the Basic Skills movement. They know the need and the availability of resources to meet those needs.

3. Lay people and professional representatives from the USOE Divisions of Education for the Disadvantaged should be involved in planning Basic Skills programs.

XI. STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES:

State education professionals, perhaps more than any group at the workshops, are "in the middle." They are the liaison between the federal group and the local agencies and must be the main connection between institutions of higher education and the school systems who hire newly trained teachers. Being in the middle isn't always fun, as some of these comments indicated.

1. Various units within SEAs can have formal or informal agreements.

   a. (formal) - intra-departmental assistance agreements.

   b. (informal) - assisting units with comprehensive plans and process facilitators.

2. SEAs can coordinate federally required in-service and dissemination components of programs, i.e., encourage different units to share in-service monies.

3. Higher education can have graduate students working as interns in SEAs on research and data analysis projects.

4. Some federal people think that the function of the SEA is to take orders from them. Then the SEAs pass these on to the LEAs. The SEA is seen as the federal government's primary support agent. Operationally, this is not always the case.

5. SEA people who operate federally funded programs often visualize themselves as federal rather than state employees.

6. Federal governments must work through the states. However, because the SEAs are so large, LEAs would often prefer to work directly with the federal government; LEAs feel that they have better control over the money when the SEAs are not monitoring programs.

7. More and more states are saying that they will not accept federal money unless the program has been approved by state legislature. The states want to know the financial timetable so that they won't be caught in a position of having, as a result of political pressures, to assume the costs of popular programs.

8. All-out efforts should be expended to clear channels of communications and to coordinate activities within and among individual departments/divisions concerned with Basic Skills in SEAs.

9. When developing the state plans for Basic Skills, all concerned groups should be represented, e.g., local education agencies, community sectors, curriculum areas, specially funded education programs.

XII. U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION

1. USOE should attempt to have more consistent, predictable timelines for budgets. With the new fiscal year, it would be helpful if all programs were on the same budget lines.

2. USOE could provide a job aide to help SEAs and LEAs locate the appropriate agency or program, e.g., toll-free number, hotline, computer terminal, chart.

3. NIE and USOE should coordinate their efforts at dissemination, e.g., the Joint Dissemination Review Panel. Coordination should focus on the local school and on how the state supports the LEAs.

4. USOE should help achieve better cooperation and facilitate functions within SEAs and between IHEs and SEAs by having site visits to help contracting agencies "on task." USOE teams could be composed of SEA and USOE staff members.

5. All-out efforts should be expended to clear channels of communications and to coordinate activities concerning Basic Skills within and between individual departments/ divisions of USOE/NIE.

6. When developing national plans for basic skills, all concerned groups should be represented.

XIII. TASK FORCE OF BASIC SKILLS

The basic question for this group was whether the task force's functions are generative or whether the task force is to be a vehicle for dissemination and public relations. If it is the former, it must be appointed early. If it is the latter, they must not feel that they had been left out of the planning process. Whatever the composition of the task force, the group stressed the necessity of including classroom teachers and representatives of business and industry.

XIV. CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

The key issues for this group are two-fold. First, Basic Skills should be established as a priority issue. Second, this decision needs to be communicated throughout the organization. The selection of the State Basic Skills is particularly important because of his/her role as coordinator of those programs which already have Basic Skills components. He/she must have leadership skills and the professional respect of his/her peers.

XV. HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education has something in common with each of the earlier role-alike groups:

As in the case of commerce/industry/parent groups, it is a recipient of the K-12 product; therefore it should coordinate with these constituencies to provide better programs.

As in the case of the classroom teachers and local educational agencies, it has substantial responsibility (especially in community colleges and/or adult agencies) for Basic Skills instruction.

As in the case of the state educators, it is "in the middle" often between USOE and the state on training and research.

Higher education is uncomfortable with criticism of its pre-service and inservice training. It is concerned that it must be in the Basic Skills delivery business, especially when that role is grossly underfunded. It is also very concerned about the fact that much of its role may diminish as there is less need for pre-service training for new teachers and more emphasis on Teacher Center inservice which doesn't use the input of higher education. Their comments:

1. Higher education must coordinate closely with all other Basic Skills units. Much of the responsibility for that communications must rest with the other agencies. Higher education should be involved at all levels and early in any planning process.

2. The Higher Education Act must include major recognition of higher education's Basic Skills roles.

3. "Open door" colleges must have the financial and philosophical support to provide Basic Skills instruction so that they can perform other teaching functions also.

4. Scholarships programs should be made available for pre-service and inservice teachers to develop and refine their teaching of Basic Skills.

5. Summer institutes available at local colleges and universities should be provided to improve the Basic Skills instruction of teachers.

6. Higher education professionals should be involved in all levels of Basic Skills programs, including the identification and selection of projects and in evaluating programs.

7. Higher education should be involved in Teacher Centers. Now it often competes with the LEAs who run the centers.

8. Higher education should become part of a "team" of professionals involved in the adult basic education movement.

9. Funds should be made available for professors to re-enter the public school classroom both to evaluate and to participate on the "firing line."

10. In order to evaluate the curriculum, an attempt should be made to follow up on teachers who have been involved in university pre-service and inservice programs.

11. Emphasis should be placed on developing higher education programs to train the following:

    a. K-12 Basic Skills Specialists (Is there such a thing, or is someone in this area a generalist by definition?)

    b. Learning Center Personnel who know the skills and the various media which can facilitate their instruction.

    c. Coordinators of faculty and staff development who can teach Basic Skills instructors who are to provide technical assistance.

12. Coordinate the planning for the ESEA and Higher Education Acts to assure that there are common Basic Skills goals.

13. Community/Colleges should help coordinate the work of other community providers such as LEAs, military units, education/job training units like VETA and OTI by using their unique position in the education system to meet the goals of the Basic Skills movement.

XVI. CONCLUSION

This report summarizes the major problems, issues, and recommendations as developed by over 300 participants at six Basic Skills workshops and a national conference during 1978. These responses centered around six organizing questions developed by the Project Staff. The second major section of the report summarizes the views of nine "role-alike" groups who gave their perceptions of the Basic Skills issues. While the recommendations made by the role-alike groups were in some cases parochial, they provided special insights from particular populations and represent "interest" viewpoints.

Perhaps one of the most interesting phenomena that evolved from the workshops was the significant consensus that was reached. Each group tended to want a larger piece of the educational and Basic Skills "pie" than it currently has, and all were very concerned and diligent in trying to find the best ways to discover and deliver Basic Skills instruction.

Goals were similar across groups and they were consistent with the first charge that was given to them by the Project Staff: Search for ways to find good programs and processes of delivery.

XVII. MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this report are "major" in the sense that they represent the view of many workshop participants. Selection of the items that were deemed most important was a subjective judgement based on the approximate number of times a recommendation was made, and the number of groups which endorsed it. The major themes include:

A. Use the new "kernel" definitions of Basic Skills and emphasize that local agencies may want to add to that Kernel.

B. Emphasize that Basic Skills are fundamental, not compensatory.

C. Involve all community agencies in the Basic Skills movement.

Use community boards and include population segments and educational agencies outside of the "establishment" K-12 system. All participants in the system should be consulted and funded appropriately.

D. Allow more decision making/finding at the local, close-to-the-student level.

E. Consider having the state Basic Skills Coordinator not within the SEA.

F. Work toward identifying and disseminating model Basic Skills programs for replication and modification.

G. Federal funds and RFPs in the Basic Skills area should be coordinated between and among all federal areas servicing Basic Skills objectives. Their funding cycles should be longer, and more detailed evaluation should be emphasized.

H. Greater flexibility for SEAs and LEAs in the use of federal funds should be encouraged and not discouraged.

I. Decision-making (curricular, administrative, organizational, etc.) should be kept at the closest level possible to the students.

J. The USOE Basic Skills major emphasis programs should initiate procedures whereby applicants and funded agencies coordinate programs and outcomes to maximize funding potentials.

K. Coordinate inservice training (perhaps through Teacher Centers) with higher education, LEAs and professional teacher organizations to develop maximum involvement and benefit.

L. Strengthen SEA ties to higher education in credentialling and service programs to better utilize potentially supportive resources.

M. Reinforce the role of community colleges as they provide Basic Skills instruction and work closely with business and commerce.

N. Credentialling should be an on-going process and not a one-short function.

O. Pre-service teachers should be assessed to determine their personal competencies in Basic Skills. If competence is not evident, credentials should be withheld.

P. USOE should focus more on the dissemination of good ideas through hotlines, a clearinghouse, professional publications, newsletters, regional offices, and personal contact.

Q. USOE should focus on coordinating and assisting, not regulating.

R. USOE should retain a major research and development role in conjunction with higher education, practitioners, and publishers.

S. The Learning Assistance Center program should be expanded with greater funds and publicity.

T. Comprehensive volunteer/paraprofessional programs involving solid training, supervision, and publicity should be implemented.

U. Post-secondary Basic Skills should be provided by "open access" community colleges, state colleges, or adult education centers. It should <u>not</u> be the responsibility of business and industry.

V. Initiate more interchange in the system. Higher education faculties should periodically return to the K-12 classroom. Traineeships and internships should increase discussion, communication, and knowledge.

W. Basic Skills initiatives should be the responsibility of the State and a function of the local educational agency.

X. Decisions regarding Basic Skills content, methodology, and evaluation should be determined by the practitioner and not by a "distant force" of administrators, business and industry leaders, IHEs, and SEAs.

Y. USOE should stimulate and not regulate issues. The USOE Basic Skills Task Force should help put USOE Basic Skills priorities in order and not support disjointed and conflicting funding requests.

The six workshops on Basic Skills and the various small group meetings were successful in drawing national attention to the priority of Basic Skills in education today. While much remains to be done, much has been learned and accomplished. This report contains recommendations that the participants felt would significantly enhance Basic Skills instruction and, as a result, benefit a large population of children, youth, and adults who are in need of more comprehensive (Basic Skills) learning. The Project Staff, in submitting this report, is encouraging the USOE Basic Skills Task Force to review, evaluate, and revise their recommendations, where appropriate, and then to process them to advance education. For success remains only in the final outcome, the achievement of higher Basic Skills for all.

APPENDICES

I. Basic Skills for Native Americans and Bilingual Students

A special meeting was held in Phoenix, Arizona, to deal with issues and recommendations that generated from the San Antonio workshop. A separate appendix is provided on these activities to present additional facts and issues in a more comprehensive fashion than the regular text would allow.

The Definition:

The definition of Basic Skills, as developed from other regional meetings, does not take into account the Supreme Court decision Lau vs Nichols which deals with equal education opportunity in the language the child understands. Consequently, we added the phase "fundamental competencies in any language." We are conscious of the fact that it could still be interpreted by those who choose to ignore the law as English being the only vehicle through which children acquire skills, but, in a short period of time, that was the best we could come up with.

In addition, we felt that the mere acquisition of Basic Skills is worthless unless those skills can be transferred to fulfill one's role in society successfully. Society in the U.S. is a pluralistic society. Therefore we added the phrase "in order to function effectively in a pluralistic society."

THEREFORE WE PROPOSE THE FOLLOWING DEFINITION:

Basic Skills refers to the fundamental competencies acquired in any language to ensure successful achievement in the areas of mathematics and communication (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in order to function effectively in a pluralistic society.

II. Methods and Approaches that are Necessary to Bilingual Education

1. Native language literacy
2. Appropriate assessment-tests and the identification of students.
3. Not confusing ESL and bilingual approaches.
4. Continuous language arts program K-16.
5. Relevant material to the U.S.
6. Integration of culture into curriculum.
7. Individualized approach.
8. Highly structured approach which is more effective than less structured approach. Examples 1. Rock Point
   2. Oregon Model-
      Follow Through Program

III. What is Working in Bilingual Programs?

1. The project at Las Cruces, where there is a good retention rate.
2. The Redwood City project which has improved attendance and attrition rate is only 2 percent.
3. The parent component.
4. The Upik Program where students are significantly higher in concept development and in self image.
5. The California project where self image and self concept are significantly higher.
6. Time, because bilingual programs are complex. A longitudinal approach is more desirable in determining the effects of bilingual education. Therefore, funding should be appropriated on at least a 3-5 year basis rather than 1 year.
7. A AA programs for bilingual teacher aids.
8. The National Bilingual Education work system.
9. Tuition and support services by network system.

IV. What Materials Are Effective?

1. Locally developed materials are working better. Materials developed in the U.S. rather than in Spain.
2. SCDC materials are working.
3. The Navajo Integrated Bilingual Bicultural Core Curriculum developed by the Native American Materials Development Center.

V. What is the Present Nature of Teacher Training?

1. University and College course are not taught in the target language.
2. Teacher preparation programs are weak in preparing future teachers in teaching basic skills.

Recommendations:

1. Teacher certification offices require courses teaching the Basic Skills.
2. Coordinate federal support services developing the Basic Skills.
3. Having the network center continue to lead the way in developing and implementing programs concerning these issues.

VI. What Assessment Processes are Being Used in Addition to Criterion-Referenced and Standardized Tests?

1. Language Dominance
2. Language interference
3. Self concept

Recommendations:

The assessment instruments should address the four skills.

VII. Who Should be Involved in Bilingual Education?

The state education agency should take the initiative to implement programs with or without federal funds.

VIII. What is the Role of the SEA?

1. Teacher certification requiring a bilingual education course.
2. Assessment procedures
3. Monitoring
4. Technical assistance
5. Evaluation
6. Describing needs
7. Input into the developmental phase of program and materials development.

IX. What is the Role of the Federal Government?

1. Proper monitoring
2. Technical assistance
3. Requesting comparative studies and evaluation procedures.

Input Sessions for Bilingual-Native American Education Basic Skills Component

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APPENDIX II

Basic Skills and Mathematics

A special meeting was held in Kansas City, October 11 and 12, 1978, of mathematics educators representing the following organizations:

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics
Association of State Supervisors of Mathematics

Their report is presented in its entirety with editing for length only.

The focus at the Office of Education is changing from concentration on reading to an emphasis on the Basic Skills of language and mathematics. At this time, we welcome this opportunity to provide input to the Office of Education on behalf of the mathematics education community. With the inclusion of mathematics in the Office of Education Basic Skills program, we feel that the Office of Education needs to establish positions for mathematics education specialists to work in its Basic Skills program; these positions should be filled as soon as possible.

Some Concerns of Mathematics Educators about the Process of Developing State Plans for Basic Skills

1. Mathematics, instead of just computation, should be stressed throughout the plan. All ten basic mathematical skill areas listed in the National Council for Supervisors Position Paper on Basic Mathematical Skills should be emphasized.

2. The planning process should provide for sufficient opportunity for input by teachers of mathematics. The process should explicitly call for the involvement of mathematics specialists (particularly local supervisors and state supervisors as well as teachers and college mathematics educators) in a significant way at every state of the planning and implementation.

3. The involvement of state and local professional mathematics education organizations affiliated with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics should be explicitly called for throughout the planning process.

4. Concern for student competency in basic skills comes from the public. Professional expertise in Basic Skills instruction must come from specialists in mathematics, reading and writing. Therefore, the planning process must involve representatives from both the community and the professional specialists.

5. All states must have specialists in mathematics at the state level. In addition, all teachers and school districts should have the services of mathematics specialists more directly available to them.

6. Local involvement should come early in the state planning process to insure sufficient flexibility to allow for adaptability to various local situations.

7. Differences among urban, rural and suburban settings should be sufficiently considered in the planning. In particular, there is a great difference between situations where there is an existing curriculum support structure and situations where there is none.

8. The Basic Skills program should build on existing support structures rather than establishing competing ones.

9. In the immediate future, mathematics will need special extra attention in the state Basic Skills emphasis which involves mathematics.

10. The plan should contain a section which focuses on teaching and learning. This section should emphasize how the planning and public relations can serve the improvement of learning of Basic Skills.

11. Procedures for assessing the mathematical needs of a population should be developed and refined.

12. In situations where former state or local right-to-read directors become Basic Skills coordinators, special precautions will be necessary to insure that mathematics instruction receives the proper attention.

13. The Basic Skills plan should provide for the coordination of Basic Skills instruction in various programs such as Title I, special education, community education, bilingual education, and the locally funded programs. Conflicting or competing programs must be avoided.

14. Caution must be taken to insure that the emphasis on Basic Skills instruction does not limit opportunities for student learning in mathematics, language and the rest of the curriculum.

15. The Basic Skills program must be designed to bring about improved instruction in Basic Skills in the classrooms. It must avoid infusing another layer of bureaucracy with a possible counter-productive result.

16. Care must be taken to avoid placing an extra management burden on teachers. If the teachers are expected to do more testing and record-keeping in addition to everything they are doing now, then they will have less time for instruction.

17. There must be sufficient recognition of the differences as well as the similarities in the learning of mathematics and the learning of language. For example, techniques that are successful for teaching reading do not automatically transfer to the teaching of mathematics.

18. The plan must provide a means of establishing priorities. For example, in the short range it may be necessary to concentrate efforts on immediate remediation in grades seven through twelve, but in the long run the greatest payoff may come from concentration in grades four through eight.

19. There is a need for criteria to determine whether or not a program should receive funding for instruction in Basic Skills. Programs that are only marginally involved in Basic Skills should not receive funds targeted for Basic Skills instruction.

Issues and Problems in the Teaching and Learning of Basic Mathematical Skills

Issues and problems in the teaching and learning of basic mathematical skills can be considered in three categories relating to students, to teachers, and to institutions. We shall consider these three categories in the order of their importance, beginning with students.

Issues and Problems Concerning Students

Mathematics concept development in children should proceed from a physical model to representational to abstract. Development of Basic Skills foundations must take this into consideration. Mathematics language development is a gradual process involving describing and recording as one goes through the various stages

We need to asmass and utilize existing information about how students can most effectively learn basic mathematics skills.

We need to develop and utilize effective means of involving parents in the process of helping their children to learn mathematics. These programs can also be designed to help parents learn mathematics.

We need to emphasize the relationship of language and mathematics. Mathematics should not consist only of numbers. The use of language in learning mathematics is critical. Furthermore, students must learn to apply mathematics to the real world and that involves interrelating language and mathematics.

We need to concern ourselves with the affective aspects of mathematics. How can we help students overcome mathematics anxiety? How can we help students to want to learn mathematics? How can we help to increase the numbers of females, of minorities and of students from poverty backgrounds who go on to study more advanced mathematics in high school and in college? Mathematics is a critical filter which determines the range of career and higher education opportunities available to a student.

We need to provide for individual differences. We must not have different expectations for different students because of sex, race, socio-economic status or other external factors. However, we must recognize that all students do not start at the same place, nor do they have the same external support.

Mobility of students, particularly urban students, can cause problems. These problems are more severe where the programs in the schools are dramatically different and where the needs of incoming students are not adequately determined.

Problems associated with the mainstreaming of special education students into regular classes must be addressed. Both the special students and the regular student must receive appropriate instruction in basic mathematical skills.

Basic Skills development must relate concept development, skill building and problem solving. Student learning will be negatively affected if there is a failure to maintain a balance between these three components.

Issues and Problems Concerning Teachers

Of all the factors related to sucessful instruction, the teacher is key. In order for a program of instruction to be successful, it must have teacher support. Therefore, it is essential that teachers be involved in program planning and development. Moreover, many of the best ideas for instruction come from creative teachers.

Teachers must be knowledgeable of the programs being taught and they must be able to relate to the students being taught. Therefore, the teachers must be provided with appropriate preservice and inservice training experiences.

There is a need for various inservice strategies for various segments of the teaching population. For example, many elementary teachers need to improve their knowledge of mathematics and how children learn mathematics. Many also need to overcome anxieties related to mathematics.

Secondary teachers usually have strong mathematics backgrounds, but they may lack skills necessary to teach basic mathematical skills to students who have not previously mastered them. With the widespread implementation of minimal competency programs, there is an urgent need to address this critical problem.

Appropriate levels and modes of staffing for effective instruction in Basic Skills is an issue of vital concern. We need to seek out the most cost effective organizational and staffing patterns for various student populations. Furthermore, we must find means to insure that financial resources are made available to guarantee appropriate staffing for instruction of students with special needs in basic skills.

Teaching must not suffer because of the need for teachers to perform administrative management tasks. The use of teacher aides and of technology to lighten this burden should be explored.

Issues and Problems Concerning Institutions

There are critical curriculum research and development needs in mathematics in the area of Basic Skills, particularly at the secondary level. Currently, the schools are under pressure to produce competent high school graduates. To date, federal resources for Basic Skills have been concentrated at the elementary level -- mostly in reading.

There is a need for a national clearinghouse to facilitate an exchange of information about local and state mathematics Basic Skills programs. We cannot afford to have everyone going out re-inventing the wheel or making the same mistakes that have been made by others.

There is a need for a unified effort by all segments of the education population. This can probably be brought about internally better than externally. The key to this will be to devise strategies that convince each group that their concerns will be addressed from a stronger advantage point by combined effort. Curriculum support personnel at the state and local levels needs to see themselves in a mutually reinforcing role.

The support of building and district line administrators is essential for effective instruction in Basic Skills.

Schools are presently in a bind between declining financial resources on the one hand and rising expectations for accountability on the other hand. At this time, there is a critical need to implement cost-effective programs of instruction in Basic Skills.

We need a systematic approach to skill development that does the following:

1. Identified goals and objectives
2. Develops an evaluation strategy (including testing) that measures student achievement of these objectives
3. Develops and implements an instructional program
4. Makes changes in the program and in individual instruction as indicated as necessary by the evaluation system.

Existing commercially developed norm-referenced tests are not appropriate for these processes.

Some factors of concern about mathematics testing include

1. Potential cultural and sex bias
2. Issues of locus of control of testing (local, state, national)
3. The issue of secrecy that surrounds standardized testing (Are students being kept in the dark about what they are supposed to know?)
4. Potential curriculum stagnation as a result of testing

There should be support for mathematics programs in local communities that will serve as an extension of mathematics programs in regular schools. For example, prototypes of facilities and programs that are available through private and non-educational institutions that support reading instruction should be encouraged.

CONCLUSION

We believe that the concerns and ideas that we have stated here will prove useful as the Office of Education proceeds to incorporate mathematics into its Basic Skills program. The opportunity for representatives from the National Council of Teacher of Mathematics, the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics, and the Association of State Supervisors of Mathematics to gather and provide this input makes us optimistic for the future of the national Basic Skills effort and the role that mathematics will play in that effort.

We have begun to establish effective communication between the mathematics education profession and the Basic Skills component of the Office of Education. We shall explore how this communication can be facilitated by the officers, the committees, the publications, the meetings and the affiliated groups of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics, and the Association of State Supervisors of Mathematics. We feel that the communication process will be greatly facilitated when the Office of Education hires specialists in mathematics education to work in its Basic Skills efforts.

APPENDIX III

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SUPERVISORS OF MATHEMATICS
POSITION PAPER ON
BASIC MATHEMATICAL SKILLS

INTRODUCTION:

The currently popular slogan "Back to the Basic" has become a rallying cry of many who perceive a need for certain changes in education. The result is a trend that has gained considerable momentum and has initiated demands for programs and evaluations which emphasize narrowly defined skills.

Mathematics educators find themselves under considerable pressure from boards of education, legislatures, and citizens groups who are demanding instructional programs which will guarantee acquisition of computational skills. Leaders in mathematics education have expressed a need for clarifying what are the basic skills needed by students who hope to participant successfully in adult society.

The narrow definition of basic skills which equates mathematic competence with computational ability has evolved as a result of several forces:

1. Declining scores on standardized achievement tests and college entrance examinations.
2. Reactions to the results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress
3. Rising costs of education and increasing demands for accountability
4. Shifting emphasis in mathematics education from curriculum content to instructional methods and alternatives
5. Increased awareness of the need to provide remedial and compensatory programs
6. The widespread publicity given to each of the above by the media.

This widespread publicity, in particular, has generated a call for action from governmental agencies, educational organizations, and community groups. In responding to these calls, the National Institute of Education adopted the area of basic skills as a major priority. This resulted in a Conference on Basic Mathematical Skills and Learning, held in Euclid, Ohio on October, 1975.

The National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics (NCSM), during the 1976 Annual Meeting at Atlanta, Georgia, met in a special session to discuss the Euclid Conference Report. More than 100 members participating in that session expressed the need for a unified position on basic mathematics

skills which would enable them to provide more effective leadership within their respective shcool systems, to give adequate rational and direction in their tasks of implementing basic mathematics program and to appropriately expand the definition of basic skills.

Hence, by an overwhelming majority, they mandated the NCSM to establish a task force to formulate a position on basic mathematical skills. This statement is the result of that effort.

RATIONAL FOR THE EXPANDED DEFINITION

There are many reasons why basic skills must include more than computation. The present technological society required daily use of such skills are estimating, problem solving, interpreting data organizing data, measuring, predicting, and applying mathematics to everyday situations. The changing needs of society, the explosion of the amount of quantitative data, and the availability of computers and calculators demand a redefining of the priorities for basic mathematics skills. In recognition of the inadequacy of computation alone, NCSM is going on record as providing both a general list of basic mathematical skills and a clarification of the need for such an expanded definition of basic skills.

Any list of basic skills must include computation. However, the role of computational skills in mathematics must be seen in the light of the contributions they make to one's ability to use mathematics in everyday living. In isolation, computational skills contribute little to one's ability to participate in mainstream society. Combined effectively with the other skill areas, they provide the learner with the basic mathematical ability needed by adults.

DEFINING BASIC SKILLS

The NCSM views basic mathematical skills as falling under ten vital areas. The tex skill areas are interrelated and many overlap with each other and with other disciplines. All are basic to pupils development of the ability to reason effectively in varied situations.

This expanded list is presented with the conviction that mathematics education must not emphasize computational skills to the neglect of other critical areas of mathematics. The ten components of basic mathematical skills are listed below, but the order of their listing should not be interpreted as indicating either a priority of importance or a sequence for teaching and learning.

Furthermore, as society changes, our ideas about which skills are basic also change. For example, today our students should learn to measure in both the customary and metric systems, but in the future the significance of the customary system will be mostly historical. There will also be increasing emphasis on when and how to use hand-held calculators and other electronic devices in mathematics.

PROLBEM SOLVING:

Learning to solve problems is the principal reason of studying mathematics. Problem solving is the process of applying previously acquired knowledge to new and unfamiliar situations. Solving word problems in texts is one form of problem solving, but students also should be faced with non-textbook problems. Problem-solving strategies involve posing questions, analyzing situations, translating results, illustrating results, drawing diagrams, and using trial and error. In solving problems, students need to be able to apply the rules of logic necessary to arrive at valid conclusions. They must be able to determine which facts are relevant. They should be unfearful of arriving at tentative conclusions and they must be willing to subject these conclusions to scrutiny.

APPLYING MATHEMATICS TO EVERYDAY SITUATIONS:

The use of mathematics is interrelated with all computation activities. Students should be encouraged to take everyday situations, translate them into mathematical expressions, solve the mathematics, and interpret the results in light of the initial situation.

ALERTNESS TO THE REASONABLENESS OF RESULTS

Due to arithmetic errors or other mistakes results of mathematical work are sometimes wrong. Students should learn to inspect all results and to check for reasonableness in terms of the original problem. With the increase in the use of calculating devices in society, this skill is essential.

ESTIMATION AND APPROXIMATION:

Students should be able to darry out rapid approximate calculations by first rounding off numbers. They should acquire some simple techniques for estimating quantity, length, distance, weight, etc. It is also necessary to decide when a particular result is precise enough for the purpose at hand.

APPROPRIATE COMPUTATIONAL SKILLS:

Students should gain facility with addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with whole numbers and decimals. Today it must be recognized that long, complicated computations will usually be done with a calculator, Knowledge of single-digit number facts is essential and mental arithmetic is a valuable skill. Moreover, there are everyday situations which demand recognition of, and simple computation with common fractions.

GEOMETRY:

Students should learn the geometric concepts they will need to function effectively in the 3-dimensional world. They should have knowledge of concepts such as point, line, plane, parallel, and perpendicular. They should know basic properties of simple geometric figures, particularly those properties which relate to measurement and problem solving skills. They also must be able to recognize similarities and differences among objects.

MEASUREMENT:

As a minimum skill, students should be able to measure distance, weight, time, capacity, and temperature. Measurement of angles and calculations of simple areas and volumes are also essential. Students should be able to perform measurement in both metric and customary systems using the appropriate tools.

READING, INTERPRETING, AND CONSTRUCTING TABLES, CHARTS, AND GRAPHS:

Students should know how to read and draw conclusions from simple tables, maps, charts, and graphs. They should be able to condense numerical information into more manageable or meaningful terms by setting up simple tables, charts, and graphs.

USING MATHEMATICS TO PREDICT:

Students should learn how elementary notions of probability are used to determine the likelihood of future events. They should learn to identify situations where immediate past experience does not affect the likelihood of future events. They should become faciliar with how mathematics is used to help make predictions such as election forecasts.

COMPUTER LITERACY:

It is important for all citizens to understand what computers can and cannot do. Students should be aware of the many uses of computers in society, such as their use in teaching, learning, financial transactions, and information storage and retrieval. The "mystique" surrounding computers is disturbing and can put persons with no understanding of computers at a disadvantage. The increasing use of computers by government, industry, and business demands an awareness of computer uses and limitations.

Anyone adopting a definition of basic skills should consider the "door-opening/door-closing" implications of the list. The following diagram illustrates expected outcomes associated with various amounts of skill development.

SCOPE OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT	EXPECTED OUTCOMES
EXPANDED SKILLS Mathematical skills beyond those described there plus a desire to learn more.	POTENTIAL LEADERS Employment and educational opportunities will continue to increase as mathematical skills continue to grow.
BASIC SKILLS The skills - described here.	EMPLOYMENT VERY LIKELY Employment opportunities are predictable. Doors to further education opportunities are open.
MINIMAL SKILLS Limited skills, primarily computation. Little exposure to the other skill areas described here.	LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES Unemployment likely. Potential generally limited to low-level jobs.

MINIMUM ESSENTIALS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION:

Today some school boards and state school boards and state legislatures are starting to mandate mastery of minimum essential skills in reading and mathematics as a requirement for high-school graduation. In the process, they should consider the potential pitfalls of doing this without an appropriate definition of "basic skills." If the mathematics requirements are set inordinately high, then a significant number of students may not be able to graduate. On the other hand, if the mathematics requirements are set too low and mathematical skills are too narrowly defined, the result could be a sterile mathematics program concentrating exclusively on learning of low-level mathematical skills. This position paper neither recommends nor condemns minimal competencies for high-school graduation. However, the ten components of basic skills stated here can serve as guidelines for state and local school systems that are considering the establishment of minimum essential graduation requirements.

One individual difference among students is style or way of learning. In offering opportunities to learn the basic skills, options must be provided to meet these varying learning styles. The present "back-to-basics" movement may lead to an emphasis on drill and practice as a way to learn.

Certainly drill and practice is a viable option, but it is only one of many possible ways to bring about learning and to create interest and motivation in students. Learning centers, contracts, tutorial sessions, individual and small-group projects, games, simulations and community-based activities are some of the other options that can provide the opportunity to learn basic skills. Furthermore, to help students fully understand basic mathematical concepts, teachers should utilize the full range of activities and materials available, including objects the students can actually handle.

The learning of basic mathematical skills is a continuing process which extends through all of the years a student is in school. In particular, a tendency to emphasize computation while neglecting the other nine skill areas at the elementary level must be avoided.

EVALUATING AND REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS:

Any systematic attempt to develop basic skills must necessarily be concerned with evaluating and reporting pupil progress.

In evaluation, test results are used to judge the effectiveness of the instructional process and to make needed adjustments in the curriculum and instruction for the individual student. In general, both educators

and the public have accepted and emphasized an overuse of and overconfidence in the results of standardized tests. Standardized tests yield comparisons between students and can provide a rank ordering of individuals, schools, or districts. However, standardized tests have several limitations including the following:

a. Items are not necessarily generated to measure a specific objective or instructional aim.
b. The tests measure only a sample of the content that makes up a program; certain outcomes are not measured at all.

Because they do not supply sufficient information about how much mathematics a student knows, standardized tests are not the best instruments available for reporting individual pupil growth. Other alternatives such as criterion tests or competency tests must be considered. In criterion tests, items are generated which measure the specific objectives of the program and which establish the student's level of mastery of these if the individual has mastered the skills necessary for a certain purpose such as entry into the job market. There is also need for open-ended assessments such as observations, interviews, and manipulative tasks to assess skills which paper and pencil tests do not measure adequately.

Reports of pupil progress will surely be made. But, while standardized tests will probably continue to dominate the testing scene for several years, there is an urgent need to begin reporting pupil progress in other terms, such as criterion tests and competency. Such data and to enable teachers to use testing as a vital part of the instructional process.

Large scale testing, whether involving all students or a random sample, can result in interpretations which have great influence on curriculum revisions and development. Test results can indicate, for example, that a particular mathematical topic is being taught at the wrong time in the student's development and that it might better be introduced later or earlier in the cirriculum. Or, the results might indicate that students are confused about some topic as a result of inappropriate teaching procedures. In any case, test results should be carefully examined by educators with special skills in the area of curriculum development.

The present paper represents a preliminary attempt by the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics to clarify and communicate its position on basic mathematical skills. The NCSM position establishes a framework within which decisions on program planning and implementation can be made. It also sets forth the underlying rationale for identifying and developing basic skills and for evaluating pupils' acquisition of these competencies. The NCSM position underscores the fundamental belief of the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics that any effective program of basic mathematical skills must be directed not "back" but forward to the essential needs of adults in the present and future.

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